

ADDRESSES

The Citizens of EDINBURGH,

On their ensuing Elections.

GENTLEMEN,

Although I am a very ancient member of your community, I have seldom known you in a situation more critical than the present. You are on the point of asserting your independency, and, by supporting the measures of your first magistrate, of opening the door of influence and power among you to every respectable citizen in his turn. The spirit you have shown, and the resolutions you have made, are highly honourable for you; but every thing depends on the execution. The least falsehood or treachery, or even weakness, among you, might ruin the whole of your honest design. Every art is used to seduce your fidelity to your native city. Plausible objections, however false, are stated to the present operations among you; and the unwary may be betrayed into such conduct, as may rivet the fetters under which you so long have groaned.

Permit me then, as a true friend to the city, to state the matter fairly to you, my fellow-citizens.

It would be invidious to trace all the causes of the present division in the town-council. Let it suffice to observe, that they are well known



known to every member of it; and that the present attempt took its rise from no political views foreign to the interest and honour of the city, but was the mere effect of public spirit, struggling under bondage, and striving to get free. It had no other end, but to make it possible for the most worthy and disinterested citizens to be of the magistracy and town-council: for it is well known, that the illiberal selfish views of one leading member of it, had for many years kept it within the narrow circle of his own friends and associates. To bring about a change of this most illiberal system, appears to have been the sole design of the present worthy chief magistrate and his friends. If they shall be obliged, in the course of this contest for independency, to bring any other objects in view, the blame must lie upon those who have exerted every nerve to prolong the domination of a few. If they have success in this worthy design, they will have the honour to emancipate their city from a shameful slavery. If they miscarry, through the weakness or infidelity of any of those who have engaged with them in the same cause, they will have the satisfaction of having done their best for the public good, and set an example that will soon be followed with more success, and supported with the unanimous voice of an enraged people. Can there be any thing so disgraceful, as that one man (not of the most eminent nor respectable of the citizens) should so long have monopolized all the power of the metropolis of Scotland for his own private emolument, without either the virtues of a citizen, or the manners of a gentleman, merely by his talent for low burgh-politics, and the protection of the city-member, from whom, on account of his station, more liberal ideas and management might have been expected.

If there is any sense of shame or of honour left in the breasts of the citizens of the second city of Great Britain, they will seize this opportunity, and free themselves from so just a reproach. And here I hope my fellow-citizens will stop. If they can once establish an independent magistracy and town-council, they have nothing to fear. They will then be courted, and not despised. Their present member, whose conduct in parliament they do not impugn, will be induced by his attachment and services, to render himself still a more deserving object of their choice; and if it shall again fall upon him, it will be much more honourable, for then it will be free.

I am sorry to find, that by some imprudence on his part, or that of his agents, it has been diligently circulated for some days past, that this contest is ultimately directed against him; and that the Right Honourable Provost and his friends have their eye on an illustrious young nobleman, whose chief residence is near their city, and whom they wish to make a patron and friend of their community.

It



It is a pity that this should have fallen from the Honourable Gentleman and his friends: for without necessity or provocation he has brought upon himself a comparison, by which it is evident that at least he cannot be a gainer.

I am confident that at present that Noble person has made no declaration of service to the city; nor am I of opinion, that any offers have been made to him on the part of the Lord Provost and his friends. It is implicit submission to the will of one man, from which they are struggling to get free; and it is absurd to suppose that they have already lifted themselves under another. But were it so, with what face can *they* upbraid them, who know what scandalous engagements they have themselves so long been under, and who at present are only attempting to draw that bar by which they have so long shut out so many worthy citizens from the magistracy?

If it should happen, however, that through the misconduct, weakness, or tyrannical behaviour, of her present great friend, protector, and adviser, the capital of Scotland should be led to look for a proper person to watch over her interests in the great councils of the nation, or to represent her loyalty and services to her most Gracious Sovereign, where can she find one superior to the Most Noble person alluded to? That young nobleman is sprung from a race of patriots and heroes, the remembrance of whom must warm the blood of every honest Scotman. From them he inherits a fortune, great as his rank, or as the utmost wish of independency; and he adds lustre to both by his talents and his virtues. He wastes not his ample wealth in idleness or gaming, or in the profligacy of the age; but he bestows it in princely hospitality, and in charitable benefactions. His love for this country has made him forsake the habits of his youth, and come to reside in the near neighbourhood of the capital, to spend his thousands and his ten thousands to encourage every liberal art, and every useful manufacture. He is much above establishing his credit on deceitful suggestions or false promises; such hollow fabrics of reputation must soon tumble down, and crush their owner in their ruins. The virtuous young nobleman needs no such arts to raise him an empty name. Whatever he promises he performs. Entirely satisfied with the esteem and confidence that mankind place in his talents and virtues, he borrows no aid from the base arts of cunning or political disguise. Such is the young nobleman. I shall draw no comparisons.

I heard several other objections besides that I have now stated and answered: one respecting the nomination or choice of a member of parliament against next election; another, respecting the calling of ministers; and a third, respecting the choice of professors, and all other

other offices, in the gift of the city. But these are all obviated, if you can carry the end of the present contest into execution. Open the door of the town-council to your first and most eminent citizens; make your magistracy independent; and then nothing but the real interest, honour, and inclinations, of the citizens, can ever be consulted in any of your affairs.

As to the young nobleman, of whom some affect to be so much afraid, and whose name they use as a pretence to deviate from the most solemn engagements, you may rest assured, that he is as much above using any of the base arts of undue influence, as he is above being corrupted. He is the grandson of that Noble Duke who did so much honour to his country, and who with such irresistible eloquence pled for and preserved the ancient privileges of your city when in the greatest danger. Inheriting the patriot spirit of his great ancestor, you need not doubt but you will obtain his aid, if the necessity of your affairs should ever require it, and that without enthralling yourselves, or becoming his bonded slaves.

September 11.

1776.

AN OLD CITIZEN.

